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35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2 to 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being as being unpatentable over Sarraf in view of Buus.

Claims 2, 10 and 11 recite: a laser control varying the laser power or an exposure time as a function of a distance of the laser light source from the image spot; and a distance meter for determining the distance of the laser light source from the image spot. Method claim 6 recites the steps of measuring the distance of the laser light source from the printing surface and varying a laser power or exposure time so as to vary a spot size of image spots on the printing surface. Method claim 8 recites measuring the distance and adjusting a spot size to predetermined value.

Sarraf discloses an autofocus mechanism in which an image surface moves in and out of an image plane, and the back reflection of the laser is detected by a photodiode (See Sarraf at column 3, lines 8 to 15). As admitted by the Office Action, Sarraf does not use a distance meter to determine a distance of the laser source from the image spot.

In fact, Sarraf specifically teaches away from using a distance meter. See MPEP2141.02. Sarraf states at column 3, lines 17 to 19: "the laser itself is used as the monitor for the image surface position, **so no external detection scheme is required to monitor media position; thus reducing costs.**" Sarraf also states that the "system is very compact, because no additional monitoring devices are required near the image plane."

It is respectfully submitted that one of skill in the art would not have provided a distance meter, whether of Buus or another reference, to the Sarraf device, as Sarraf specifically seeks to avoid such a distance meter to reduce costs and provide a compact device.

It is also respectfully submitted that the motivation provided by the Office Action is not found in any of the references, and is not applicable to Sarraf. Sarraf specifically does not want to maintain a constant distance with a distance meter: it wants to avoid such a detection scheme. It is not understood where the motivation to provide a distance meter to Sarraf derives.

In addition, such a distance meter would be incompatible with the entire feedback noise control and purported invention of Sarraf.

Withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 103 rejection to claims 2 to 11 is respectfully requested.

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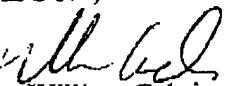
Conclusion

It is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and applicants respectfully request such action.

Respectfully submitted,

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